

Boston, March 1, 1845

My beloved friend Webb:

"Out of sight, out of mind." So runs the proverb. But every proverb is not true; at least, not always. Your case, for instance, is a notable exception. Believe me, you have an abiding place in my mind and heart; and it is not necessary to see you, face to face, to quicken my remembrance of your worth and genius. Still, like a true lover, I frequently "sigh like a furnace" to get another glimpse of your countenance, and to see your dear household once more "in the flesh." We are told of a time when "there shall be no more sea." Do you think the Atlantic will cease to roll between us in our day? If so, how soon, and by what process? Will its "kindred drops" so "mingle into one," as to cause the absorption or evaporation of that one great drop? Is this the way in which Ireland will be "annexed" to the United States? On this point, I am somewhat skeptical. Besides, I am in a hurry, and cannot wait to see the solution of a problem like this. I am growing old daily, (to say nothing about an hourly progress,) and I suspect you are in the same predicament. When, in 1840, we for the first time mingled our affections together, and looked each other kindly in the face, we were somewhat fresh and young, you know, ~~and~~ agile and sportive. Alas! already, almost five long years have since been added to our uncertain term of earthly existence. Now, I cannot endure the thought of our being two "venerable old gentlemen" before we embrace each other again. You must come over and pay me a friendly visit, by the next steamer — if practicable! Remember, I have been over to Dublin to see you and yours. Remember, too, the old adage — "One good turn deserves another." To be sure, the ocean which separates us is about as broad as it ever was; but then the time of crossing it has been astonishingly abridged, requiring on the average only a fortnight. It will yet be reduced to a week, before either of us shall have reached the age of three score years and ten, if either survive so long. That is my prophecy. But only think of it! In fourteen days, it is in your power to be here in our midst in Boston! Would not your arrival make a commotion among us? Try, and see. A Yankee welcome can never compare with an Irish one; but we will do our best. Seriously — can you not make it in the way of business, as well as of friendship, to come over and see us? Of course, Hannah must come too, if she can. In the name of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, I enjoin it upon Henry C. Wright to return home without delay, and to bring you two with him, and also James Haughton, and Richard Allen, and as many of your noble brothers, as he can entice or compel, without too flagrantly violating his non-resistance principles.

Procrastinating man that I am! Here it is the 1st of March, and within a few hours of the departure of the Liverpool steamer. I have a volume of things to write about, but scarcely a page of it shall I be able to complete. But I am relieved in mind to know that Edmund Quincy is your faithful and attentive correspondent; so that you are kept pretty well advised of matters and things as they pertain to our little friendly circle in Boston and its vicinage. As to the anti-slavery enterprise, as you see the Standard, Liberator and Herald of Freedom, you are kept pretty well instructed as to the most prominent events connected with it. Apparently, the slaveholding power has never been so strong — has never seemed to be so invincible — has never held such complete mastery over the whole country — has never so successfully hushed defiance at the Eternal and Just One — as at the present time; and yet never has it in reality been so weak, never has it had so many uncompromising assailants, never has it been so filled with doubt and consternation, never has it been so near its downfall, as at this moment. Upon the face of it, this statement looks absurdly paradoxical; but it is true, nevertheless. We are groping in thick darkness; but it is that darkest hour which is said to precede the dawn of day. As a nation, slavery has horribly corrupted us, so that we "make haste to shed innocent blood," and neither fear God nor regard man; but there are hundreds of thousands of our population who will not bow the knee to Baal, and we may yet obtain a glorious victory.



I have little doubt that Texas is now a member of the American confederacy. The next mail from Washington will unquestionably bring the last decisive action of the Senate on the subject, and that will be in favor of annexation. There is a bare possibility that the reparations project may again be defeated; for the vote will be a very close one. But the prize is too great to be put in peril by the studiousness of one or two opponents, and they will be bribed to any extent that may be necessary. The history of this Texan movement, from its commencement to the present time, I verily believe has no parallel for villany and inhumanity, connected with the most despotic purposes. We have been betrayed by a party, making the highest pretensions to democracy. It is the shameless defection of the Northern portion of the Democratic party, that has given this bloody and atrocious triumph to the South. But the greediness of the Slave Power will not be satisfied with the annexation of Texas. Its settled purpose is to conquer all Mexico, and on its fertile plains to establish slavery and the slave trade.

Perhaps nothing has operated so powerfully on the public mind, in favor of annexation, as the hue-and-cry which has been so artfully raised against the alleged design of England to subjugate Texas to her own will and purpose, <sup>in order to cripple</sup> ~~for the purpose of crippling~~ the commerce and manufactures of the United States, and put in jeopardy our glorious "democratic institutions" — the most cherished of which is the institution of slavery! There is among us a great deal of fear and hatred of England; and it is only necessary for the leading political demagogues to make their appeals to this infernal disposition, and they can achieve whatever feat of scoundrelism they wish to perform. Unhappily, at this juncture, in connection with slavery, the hatred of the Irish population among us toward England is of a bitter and most implacable type, and it all goes in favor of the annexation of Texas, though motives of terror or revenge. It is a most deplorable circumstance that, religiously and politically, almost the entire body of Irishmen in this country are disposed to go with the accursed South for any and every purpose, and to any extent. The patriotic and Christian appeals which have been made to them by Daniel O'Connell and Father Mathew, and others of their countrymen at home, on this subject, have not had the slightest perceptible effect on their minds. They are a mighty obstacle, therefore, in the way of negro emancipation on our soil. Truly, they know not what they do.

I must say a few words, respecting the deplorable alienation which has taken place in the mind of our once beloved friend Rogers towards some of his old and warmest friends. He has needlessly and criminally involved himself in a matter, in which neither his character nor his editorial independence was in the slightest degree implicated. John R. French, the late printer of the Herald, is a young man of a very irascible temper, wilful and obstinate to a proverb, and stocked with self-conceit; though he possesses some good qualities. He is, moreover, prospectively, the son-in-law of friend Rogers. His management of the Herald, and his treatment of the Board of Managers of the New-Hampshire Society, have been disgraceful and arrogant in the highest degree. It is quite needless for me, in this letter, to go into the details of his case, as you have doubtless read all that has been published, on both sides of the question. It was strictly a business affair, and we all supposed could be amicably settled; and I have no doubt would have been, had not friend Rogers given French such bad counsel, and come to his rescue in so gratuitous and violent a manner. The special meeting of the New-Hampshire Society, which was called expressly to have the affair fully and impartially investigated, was a meeting held in accordance with the expressed wishes of French, and before it he declared it to be his determination to go, and openly meet the issue. Rogers advised him to treat the meeting with contempt, and not to make any defence; being conscious, as it is now apparent, that, if he should put himself on trial, all the facts were against him, and ~~accordingly~~ <sup>accordingly</sup> a verdict must be rendered against him. French, however, in the absence of friend Rogers from Concord at that time, had the impudence to attempt to defend himself at the meeting; and the committee of arbitration, (on which were Wendell Phillips, Edmund Quincy, Anne Warren Weston, and myself,) after a long and searching examination, were compelled to pronounce him in the wrong; though they treated him, in their report, with quite as much delicacy and charity as the facts warranted. I wish you would peruse that report, and mark how careful is its phraseology, and what it was that the committee undertook to decide. That report was barely refused a place in the Herald, together with the proceedings of the meeting — and this was done with the sanction of friend Rogers!



It was never dreamed by any of us, that the affair would become so serious, or that any tie of friendship would be ruptured by it. For my own part, I resorted to every expedient, consistent with good faith and honor, to effect a reconciliation. I had, in private, long and earnest interviews with Rogers and French, and affectionately besought them to weigh the consequences that must inevitably grow out of a persistence in their course. Various propositions were made to them to take the Herald, on as long a lease as they could desire, or under the supervision of the Board as to the financial department, leaving friend Rogers in the possession of that unlimited editorial freedom which he has always enjoyed, and which nobody among us has desired to see abridged; — but all in vain. They behaved precisely like the dog in the manger. They had grown so "free" as to be disregardful of right and justice, and to claim exemption from all accountability. They would brook nothing in the shape of friendly counsel or admonition. We were viewed as impertinent intermeddlers, treated with contempt, and finally branded as enemies. For a long time, we clung to the hope that the illness of Rogers was mainly the cause of his extraordinary behaviour; but even this is gone — for now that he is recovered, he is more unkind and imperious than ever, and cannot speak peaceably to us. This is a development of character most afflicting and astounding to us. We see, or think we see, in him, (unless we ourselves are the victims of a wild delusion,) an entire destitution of magnanimity, a wanton disregard of the rights of others, a disposition to play the autocrat, a criminal shuffling with respect to his own declarations and admissions, and a pitiable inflation of mind, as though he had distanced all others engaged in the work of Reform. In attacking others from whom he dissents, no one is habitually more severe and unsparing than himself; yet I have never known one more sensitive when he is criticised by others, or so restive under the gentle reproof of affectionate and faithful friends. I think he has never forgiven James Haughton for venturing to express his regret at the manner in which he (Rogers) satirized O'Connell's table devotions. Now, this is a great infirmity, to say the least. Certainly, we ought to remember that, in every strife, there are blows to take, as well as blows to give; and we ought to receive them in good temper and with manly endurance. Especially should we receive with patience and kindness the admonitions of our friends, and love them all the more cordially for their rare fidelity; for, alas! how prone are friends to wink at each other's failings, under circumstances that require a prompt and frank rebuke!

For the last fifteen months, friend Rogers has had a strong tendency of mind toward speculative atheism. He does not care to recognize the existence of God; he does not seem to think it is of any consequence to determine whether there be any such being; he does not have any faith in immortality beyond the grave; he is captivated by Owen's theory of no property as a personal right; and he has run into folly on the subject of freedom, and joined those whom Milton so aptly describes:

"License they mean, when they cry liberty."

Having thus made shipwreck of his religious faith, it does not greatly surprise me that he has lost sight of the claims of justice, in the matter of the Herald of Freedom, and that he is in an irritable and most unhappy state of mind. As to mere speculative opinions, I care nothing about them, except when I plainly see that they are injurious to the temper and conduct of those who embrace them.

Friend Rogers has a growing horror of all organized societies, and fancies that to seek their extinction is the first duty of man, and "the end of the law for righteousness" to every one who will join in this Quixotic crusade. To have a chairman or secretary at a meeting is an enormity not to be tolerated; committees are tyrannical usurpers; boards of managers are soul-killing "corporations." Order and system, however simple, are viewed by him with uneasiness, and even alarm. On this subject, he has really lost his wits, and become a raving maniac. But the most ludicrous part of it is, that he fancies a cruel conspiracy has been formed by his old friends to crush him, on account of these harmless absurdities! Hence, he persists in declaring that, though an issue has been made with J. B. French, respecting the printing of the Herald, it is a mere trick, a hypocritical manoeuvre; because the real design is to drive him from his editorial chair, and thus prevent him from propagating his opinions in regard to organizations and free meetings!! The fact, that we had never even noticed his peculiar views on that subject, so trifling did we consider them, goes for nothing. The fact, that he and French have had a transfer or lease of the Herald repeatedly proffered to them, even since the outbreak, goes for nothing. The fact, that all his Boston friends, from whom he has now cut loose, have remonstrated with him against leaving the Herald, goes for nothing. The fact, that while he was editor of the Herald, from no quarter did any voice come, objecting to his "no organization" notions, goes for nothing. The fact, that the committee of investigation earnestly expressed the hope that satisfactory arrangements would be made with himself and French for editing and printing the Herald, goes for nothing. The fact, that the Board have never ceased to offer him the editorial chair unconditionally, goes for nothing. The fact, that the State Society, at its last meeting, unanimously instructed the Board to procure his services, without any restraint upon his mind or pen on any subject, goes for nothing. He is, alas! the victim of "the genius of corporation"!!! He is



a martyr to his devotion to "free meetings" and a "spontaneous press"! If this be not monomania, what is? He persists, moreover, in saying that the Herald of Freedom is dead; and he and French have issued proposals for raising it up from the grave! This last act is capping the climax of folly and injustice, and it excites universal surprise and regret. Of course, he has a party with him, but it is a very small one indeed, and composed of those on whom no permanent reliance can be placed, as they are generally of an impulsive and eccentric character, and led by ~~un~~<sup>with</sup> ~~un~~<sup>with</sup> blind sympathy rather than reason and justice. They are generally those who have lost their balance religiously, or else some old grudges to gratify against the Liberator, the Standard, the Massachusetts or American Society, or the Boston abolitionists. I cannot believe the new paper will succeed, ~~whether its title be "the Herald of Freedom," or any other;~~ but it may obtain a short, spasmodic existence. At present, Rogers makes use of Henry Clapp's paper, "The Pioneer," as his organ. As word as to Clapp. He has considerable talent, and the zeal of a new convert; but lacks judgment and good sense — is impulsive and vain — tries to imitate Rogers in his style of writing and speaking — fancies that, next to R., he is the greatest reformer extant, "the pioneer" of the new world — is not to be relied on, I fear — and will prove a dangerous friend to Rogers. He fails to perceive the difference between the step ridiculous, and the step sublime, and is full of inflation.

Ms. V. A. 1.1  
v. 4, p. 11

(Single sheet - folio post)

308 Nov. 1845



Richard D. Webb  
Printer,  
Dublin, Ireland.



I did see H. C. Wright even got a letter from me, addressed to your care? He has never acknowledged its receipt. I presume his family are all well, or I should have heard from Miss Sophia. I meant to have written this steamer, but it is now too late.

Ms. A. 1.1 v. 4 p. 11

Our old friend George Bradburn has left us in a towering passion, and joined the pseudo "liberty party." These are trying times, certainly. The number of those who are raising the cry, "No Union with Slaveholders," is steadily increasing. The position of disunion is palpably the only one we can consistently or innocently occupy as the advocates of the slaves, as the friends of freedom, and as the obedient children of God. It must prevail, at last. The shirts which were kindly forwarded to me by your brother James were safely received, and prized most highly. I desire you to communicate to him my warmest thanks for this poor memorial of his friendship, and assure him that it is estimated by me infinitely above the mere market value of the articles sent. Tell your beloved wife that her wishes, expressed some time ago in a note, are now realized, as well as my own. Ten weeks ago, my dear Helen presented me with a fine little daughter; so that the account now stands — four boys and one girl. I have named her after my wife and mother — "Helen Frances." We are all in the enjoyment of health: my own is very much improved. As many affectionate remembrances as there are stars in the sky to Henry C. Wright, Richard Allen, James Haughton, all the Webbs, Maria Waring, &c. &c. Yours, with intense affection, Wm. Lloyd Garrison.